Grave Digger

INTERVIEW: CHRIS BOLTENDAHL

In the second half of the 1990s, traditional heavy and power metal was my favorite musical genre, and Grave Digger held its place at the top, largely thanks to their album Tunes of War. For this reason, I made a special effort to arrange an interview with Chris Boltendahl during the promotion of their album Excalibur, which also left a strong impression on me. This took place in September 1999.

If I remember correctly, I somehow got hold of his email, and to my surprise, he replied relatively quickly. He connected me with someone from the promotional team (I no longer recall the details), and the interview was arranged. Although it was supposed to be published in issue 4 of Dragon Breath, this fanzine soon ceased publication, leaving me with a pile of unpublished material. Part of this content was later used in the first issue of United Forces magazine, but by the time it was published (spring or summer 2000), the interview was already quite old and no longer relevant.

I recently rediscovered the recording of that conversation, and I am now sharing it in its entirety. Considering that Grave Digger will be performing in Zagreb next month, this transcript may be of particular interest to devoted fans. As with the Sodom interview, I am first presenting the English version, followed by the Croatian translation.

U drugoj polovici 90-ih godina, tradicionalni heavy i power metal bio je moj omiljeni glazbeni pravac, a Grave Digger zauzimao je svoje mjesto pri vrhu, ponajviše zahvaljujući albumu Tunes of War. Iz tog razloga, svojski sam se potrudio dogovoriti intervju s Chrisom Boltendahlom tijekom promocije njihovog albuma Excalibur, koji mi je također bio iznimno dojmljiv. Bilo je to u rujnu 1999. godine.

Ako me sjećanje ne vara, nekako sam došao do njegovog e-maila, a na moje iznenađenje, odgovorio je relativno brzo. Povezao me s osobom iz promotivnog tima (ostalih detalja se više ne sjećam), i intervju je dogovoren. Iako je trebao biti objavljen u Dragon Breath broju 4 , taj je fanzin ubrzo prestao izlaziti, ostavljajući me s hrpom neobjavljenog materijala. Dio tog sadržaja iskorišten je u prvom broju United Forces magazina, no u vrijeme objave (proljeće ili ljeto 2000.) intervju je već bio prilično star i nedovoljno aktualan.

Nedavno sam ponovno pronašao snimku tog razgovora, te ga u nastavku prenosim u cijelosti. S obzirom na to da će Grave Digger idućeg mjeseca održati koncert u Zagrebu, vjernim fanovima ovaj transkript mogao bi biti posebno zanimljiv. Kao i kod intervjua sa Sodomom, prvo donosim verziju na engleskom jeziku, a potom slijedi i hrvatski prijevod.

Chris, I know promotional campaigns for new albums can be exhausting for musicians, so I hope you're not too tired right now.

No, this is my first interview today. I have 13 more after this one.

13? Then I guess I'm getting you at a good moment!

Yeah, it would seem so!

I am honored because, if you ask me, among all the classic German metal bands still active today, Grave Digger are the best.

Oh, thank you very much. Yeah, that's a great compliment for us.

Okay, let's start the interview. The main highlight right now is your new album, Excalibur, which was released recently.

Yeah, that's one week old now.

Yes, it was released exactly a week ago. This is your third full conceptual album. First came Tunes of War (1996), centered on the Scottish-English Wars, then Knights of the

Cross (1998), about the Templars. Now, the story focuses on King Arthur, the Knights of the Round Table, Mordred, and Morgane Le Fay.

Yeah.

It's clear that your recent inspiration comes from historical themes and events.

Yes. Oh, I've been into history since Tunes of War. After that album, we had something like professors, very professional in reading history books. And after Knights of the Cross, we thought about what we could do for the next record. We had no idea at first: I wanted to do the Odyssey, about Odysseus and the Trojan War; Uwe wanted to do some Reaper stories; and sometimes I thought about doing Tunes of War Part II. Then we put all these topics on our homepage, and the fans decided which story we should do for the next album. About 1,500 fans took part in this poll, and around 50% said, "Hey, do the King Arthur story." That's why we made the third record about King Arthur.

So these three albums form a kind of trilogy, right?

Yes, I think of them as a heavy metal trilogy about history.

Yeah. And you wrote the whole „Excalibur" album together with Yvonne, right?

Actually, I wrote it with Uwe, our guitar player. And I wrote the lyrics with Yvonne, Uwe's girlfriend, yeah.

This album is again about British history. When, if ever, can we expect something about German history?

Oh, I think never, because handling German history as a German musician is very difficult. If you do that, a lot of people in Germany will say, "Look, this guy from Grave Digger is into fascism." Writing a concept album about German history as a German band is too difficult for me. It's too dangerous. We are not a fascist band - we are far from fascism, all that shit. But if you make a concept album about the Second World War or the Nibelungen, everybody will say, "Hey, look, they are real fascists." Another point is that I'm not very interested in German history.

I have to admit, I honestly don't understand why!

I know, I don't know why either! (laughs)

What's confusing is that you're not the first German band I've heard say this.

Yeah, I think so, yeah. For other people, like Uwe, it's more interesting to read German history as Germans. For me, it's more interesting to read Scottish history than German history. I think the histories of other countries are far more interesting than our own.

Do you know anything about Croatian history?

I know nothing about Croatian history.

Well, maybe that could inspire another album in the future! (laughs) As for the music, I really enjoy it - true heavy metal with a powerful sound and strong vocal lines. Some similar bands, like Blind Guardian or Stratovarius, play rhythmically too fast at times, which can make their music feel a bit monotonous.

Yeah, Stratovarius and Blind Guardian - for me, it's too fast, and I don't like the vocals. They're like "aaaaaaa," very high-pitched. When we write a CD, we don't look right or left. Yeah. We only look into our hearts and our souls. Every Grave Digger CD is the best we can do at that moment. Yeah. I don't know what will happen with Grave Digger in the future, but believe me, we'll never make a mistake like the Digger CD in the '80s. We want to be a heavy metal band until we're 50, everybody. I want to be the first grey-haired heavy metal singer in Germany! (laughs) We're also thinking about other concept CDs, because I think Grave Digger is a concept album band now. At the moment, we're thinking about a new topic for the next record, which will be released in 2001. What we want is to keep the magic in our hearts, the heavy metal magic, for our whole lives. That's how we want to show our fans what a real heavy metal band is. We don't just live heavy metal. Don't get me wrong - I don't wake up in the morning and drink beer. I'm a normal guy, but in my heart, I live heavy metal.

And I suppose you listen to other heavy metal musicians quite often?

Yes, but mostly the older ones. I'm a big fan of Black Sabbath and Ozzy Osbourne, Saxon, Iron Maiden, Motörhead, and Judas Priest, one of my favorite bands. I don't listen much to new heavy metal bands here in Germany or abroad. What I like, I pick up from the German market, because I'm also the manager of Warhead, White Skull from Italy, and Brainstorm. White Skull will support Grave Digger on our German and Italian tour next year.

Next year in Italy? That sounds great because I live very close to the Italian border.

That's cool. I think we'll play two to four shows in February and March in Italy. Later, we plan to return for some big summer festivals across Europe with Grave Digger. We're considering major festivals in Eastern Europe as well, in countries like Poland and Romania. I don't know what will happen in Croatia.

Most likely nothing, that's why I hope to see you in Italy! But hopefully, in the future, things will change and someone will bring Grave Digger there.

Well, that would be cool. Our booking agency is listed in the booklet of the new CD, and it's the same agency that handles Blind Guardian! (laughs)

Thank you for this useful information! (laughs) Okay, let's talk more about the album. There are guest musicians, like Subway to Sally, whose authentic instruments really create an impressive, medieval atmosphere.

Yes, absolutely. After we wrote all the songs for the new record, we thought about how to give it a very special atmosphere. Someone suggested using authentic medieval instruments, and we thought, "Who could play these?" I knew some German bands like In Extremo and Subway to Sally. We called our tour booker, Henry, who was touring with Subway to Sally as their tour manager. He asked the guys, and they said, "No problem, we're fans of Grave Digger too." And

they recorded for the album. Now we're big fans and friends. Yeah. We also asked Piet from Iron Savior, and Hansi from Blind Guardian. They had sung backing vocals on Tunes of War before and said, "No problem, we'll do it if we have time." Luckily, both had time, came into the studio, and we recorded the background vocals in two days.

Only two days? That's impressive!

Yes, only two days. The whole production took us four weeks in the studio - two weeks for recording and two weeks for mixing. We're a heavy metal band, so we don't write songs in the studio. We come in very well prepared. That's why the recordings only took two weeks, and the mixing took the other two weeks.

But the result is phenomenal, fantastic! It's one of my favorite albums of the year so far.

Okay, thank you very much.

You mentioned before that there are other guests on the album, like Hansi from Blind Guardian and Piet from Iron Savior. It's clear that there's a real friendship between German metal bands, not competition.

I think friendship between heavy metal bands is stronger among the older bands. I'm also good friends with Gamma Ray's Kai Hansen, Matt Sinner from Primal Fear, and Peavy from Rage. By the way, do you like the new Rage?

Well, I don't know what to say... (laughs)

Okay, give me your honest answer. You're a heavy metal fan, and I'm guessing you don't like the new Rage.

I'll admit, the new Rage is… confusing! (laughs)

It's more like pop music. But if I want to listen to pop, I'll just put on Joe Cocker or something else.

Let me put it this way - it might be a good record, but it's not as heavy and powerful as I would prefer or expect. Okay, they changed the whole lineup, but that's probably not the reason. I'll probably interview Peavey next month and find out! (laughs)

Yeah, no problem. Give him my best regards! (laughs) We're good friends.

Let's continue with the „Excalibur" album. Video promotion on Viva and MTV is very important these days. Will you record a video for a particular song, like you did with "Rebellion" in 1996?

No, no video. There aren't any stations here in Germany, or in other countries, showing heavy metal videos. I think we might consider making a heavy metal video in two or three years if the heavy metal boom continues at this level. But in Germany, there are no heavy metal TV shows, nothing. I'd rather put the money we'd spend on a video into the live show. Yeah, with lots of pyros, stage setups, everything.

Since we started talking about live shows, we didn't really finish our conversation about the tour, except for the fact that you'll be playing in Italy and probably Eastern Europe.

We're doing one show in Germany this year as a test. Then we start on January 6th in Hamburg - yes, Hamburg. After Germany, we go to Sweden for a big festival. Then Italy, Greece, and perhaps Austria and Switzerland. After that, we'll play in Spain and France. In the summer, we plan to go to Eastern Europe. Then in May, we're heading to America and South America. It's a lot of work, but we like it. We're heavy metal fans ourselves, and we love touring with Grave Digger in every country in the world… except Japan. We hate Japan.

Really? Why not Japan?

No, it's not our country. I think they prefer that "aaaaa" high-pitched vocal style… that kind of music. We're a real heavy metal band, we're just too hard for them.

Now I'm confused again - I saw a live report on Viva Metalla when you visited Japan…

Oh, you saw that part about our trip to Japan?

Yes, that was two years ago.

It was a crazy trip. Our guitar player Uwe was sick for a week in Japan, he had to shit all day. And Japan is just a crazy place. It's so far away, fucking 12,000 kilometers from Germany!

Yes, I know. But you have to admit - their fans are really loyal.

Yeah, crazy fans. Yes, but the heavy metal scene in Japan is declining.

Really? Perhaps because Loudness is slowing down too…

Oh, Loudness - I like them very much. I saw them in 1980 in Germany, and they blew my mind. Yes, almost 20 years ago.

Okay, let's talk more about your tour. How will you handle the authentic instruments we discussed earlier?

We'll use them in the show through a sampler. It's too expensive to bring the Subway to Sally guys on tour, and I think they'll be in the studio in January anyway. We're not a big band, we're a metal band! (laughs) We'll play the instruments from the sampler over the keyboards.

Yes, but look at Rage and their shows with the Lingua Mortis Orchestra.

Ask them why they're doing that right now! (laughs) Maybe we'll play one show next year in Berlin with the guys from Subway to Sally, and they'll perform these authentic instruments in our show, but only for that one show.

Since we keep talking about the heavy metal scene, can you tell me more about what you think of metal right now?

Yes, I think metal is very big at the moment. But every trend eventually ends. If a type of music becomes very popular in Europe, every record company will sign similar bands and flood the market. After that, the boom or trend dies down, because there are just too many bands for the fans. Nobody has the money to buy 20 or 30 new CDs from new bands in a month.

Okay, it seems that we've covered all the important and current topics. Thank you very much for your time. I truly hope to see you on the new tour, and hopefully in Croatia sometime in the future!

Yeah, that would be really cool to visit your country again!

Again?

I've visited Rijeka. That was in 1987.

I can't believe it, I'm from Rijeka! I hope you really had a great time here.

Yes, I like the city very much. That's one of the things I remember clearly. I like the harbour. After that, I stayed for one week in Split. I really like the Croatian countryside. I have a lot of friends who spent their holidays in Croatia this summer, and they told me it's getting very expensive.

Oh yes, that's for sure. That's one of the side effects of success in tourism.

Well, don't take it from the tourists! (laughs) Because if the tourists don't come to Croatia, that's an even bigger problem. It's the same in Greece now - Greece is very expensive at the moment. And if these countries become too expensive, tourists will go elsewhere again. I really hope I can come back and play in Rijeka.

That would be great!

When we meet, I think we have to drink a beer.

Of course, the beer is on me! (laughs)

Okay, my friend. I hope to see you in the future.

It will be a real honour for me. Thank you very much!

Best regards from the band. Bye!

Chris, znam da promotivne kampanje za nove albume mogu biti iscrpljujuće za glazbenike, pa se nadam da sada nisi previše umoran.

Ne, ovo mi je prvi intervju danas. Imam još 13 nakon ovog.

13? Onda pretpostavljam da te hvatam u dobrom trenutku!

Da, nema problema.

Počašćen sam jer, ako mene pitaš, među svim klasičnim njemačkim metal bendovima koji su još aktivni danas, Grave Digger je najbolji.

Oh, hvala ti puno. Da, to je zaista odličan kompliment za nas.

U redu, krenimo s intervjuom. Glavni fokus trenutno je vaš novi album *Excalibur*, koji je nedavno objavljen.

Da, upravo je star jedan tjedan.

Da, objavljen je točno prije tjedan dana. Ovo je vaš treći puni konceptualni album. Prvo je bio *Tunes of War* (1996.), usredotočen na škotsko-engleske ratove, zatim *Knights of the Cross* (1998.), o templarima. Sada se priča fokusira na kralja Arthura, Vitezove okruglog stola, Mordreda i Morgan Le Fay.

Da.

Jasno je da tvoje nedavne inspiracije dolaze iz povijesnih tema i događaja.

Da. Poviješću se bavim još od *Tunes of War*. Nakon tog albuma imali smo nešto poput profesora koji je bio vrlo profesionalan u čitanju povijesnih knjiga. Nakon *Knights of the Cross* razmišljali smo što bismo mogli napraviti za sljedeći album. U početku nismo imali pojma: ja sam htio raditi *Odiseju*, o Odiseju i Trojanskom ratu; Uwe je htio neke priče o Reaperu; a ponekad sam razmišljao o *Tunes of War Part II*. Onda smo sve te teme stavili na našu web stranicu i fanovi su odlučili koju priču trebamo napraviti za sljedeći album. Otprilike 1.500 fanova sudjelovalo je u anketi i oko 50 % je reklo: „Hej, napravite priču o kralju Arthuru." Zato smo napravili treći album o kralju Arthuru.

Dakle, ova tri albuma čine neku vrstu trilogije, zar ne?

Da, ja ih smatram metal trilogijom o povijesti.

Da. I cijeli album ste napisali zajedno s Yvonne, zar ne?

Zapravo, napisao sam ga s Uweom, našim gitaristom. A tekstove sam napravio s Yvonne, Uweovom djevojkom.

Ovaj album je ponovno o britanskoj povijesti. Kada, ako ikada, možemo očekivati nešto o njemačkoj povijesti?

Oh, mislim da nikada, jer baviti se njemačkom poviješću kao njemački glazbenik vrlo je teško. Ako to napraviš, mnogi u Njemačkoj će reći: „Pogledajte, ovaj tip iz Grave Diggera je fašist." Pisanje konceptualnog albuma o njemačkoj povijesti kao njemački bend preteško je za mene. Previše je opasno. Nismo fašistički bend - daleko smo od fašizma i svih tih sranja. Ali ako napraviš konceptualni album o Drugom svjetskom ratu ili Nibelunzima, svi će reći: „Hej, gledajte, oni su pravi fašisti." Druga stvar je da mi njemačka povijest nije baš zanimljiva.

Moram priznati da iskreno ne razumijem zašto!

Znam, ni ja ne znam zašto! (smijeh)

Zbunjujuće je što nisi prvi njemački bend od kojeg to čujem.

Da, mislim da je tako. Za neke ljude, poput Uwea, zanimljivije je čitati njemačku povijest jer su Nijemci. Za mene je zanimljivije čitati škotsku povijest nego njemačku. Mislim da su povijesti drugih zemalja daleko zanimljivije od naše vlastite.

Znaš li išta o hrvatskoj povijesti?

Ne znam ništa o hrvatskoj povijesti.

Pa možda bi to mogla biti inspiracija za neki budući album! (smijeh) Što se tiče glazbe, stvarno mi se sviđa - pravi heavy metal s moćnim zvukom i snažnim vokalnim linijama. Neki slični bendovi, poput Blind Guardiana ili Stratovariusa, ponekad sviraju ritmički prebrzo, što njihovu glazbu može učiniti malo monotonijom.

Da, Stratovarius i Blind Guardian - za mene je to prebrzo i ne sviđaju mi se vokali. Oni su poput „aaaaaaa", vrlo visoki tonovi. Kad pišemo CD, ne gledamo lijevo ni desno. Gledamo samo u naša srca i duše. Svaki CD Grave Diggera je najbolji koji možemo napraviti u tom trenutku. Ne znam što će se dogoditi s Grave Diggerom u budućnosti, ali vjerujte mi, nikada nećemo napraviti pogrešku kao s *Digger* albumom iz 80-ih. Želimo biti heavy metal bend dok svi ne budemo imali 50 godina. Želim biti prvi sijedi heavy metal pjevač u Njemačkoj! (smijeh)

Također razmišljamo o drugim konceptualnim albumima, jer mislim da je Grave Digger sada bend koji radi konceptualne albume. Trenutno razmišljamo o novoj temi za sljedeći album, koji će biti objavljen 2001. Ono što želimo jest zadržati magiju u srcima - heavy metal magiju - cijeli život. Tako želimo pokazati fanovima što znači pravi heavy metal bend. Ne živimo samo heavy metal. Nemoj me pogrešno shvatiti - ne ustajem ujutro i ne pijem pivo. Normalan sam tip, ali u srcu živim heavy metal.

I pretpostavljam da često slušaš druge heavy metal glazbenike?

Da, ali uglavnom starije. Veliki sam fan Black Sabbatha i Ozzyja Osbournea, Saxona, Iron Maidena, Motörheada i Judas Priesta, jednog od mojih omiljenih bendova. Ne slušam previše novih heavy metal bendova ovdje u Njemačkoj ili u inozemstvu. Ono što mi se sviđa uzimam s njemačkog tržišta, jer sam također menadžer za Warhead, White Skull iz Italije i Brainstorm. White Skull će biti predgrupa Grave Diggeru na našoj njemačkoj i talijanskoj turneji sljedeće godine.

Sljedeće godine u Italiji? To zvuči odlično jer živim vrlo blizu talijanske granice.

Super. Mislim da ćemo odsvirati dvije do četiri svirke u veljači i ožujku u Italiji. Kasnije planiramo vratiti se na neke velike ljetne festivale diljem Europe s Grave Diggerom. Razmatramo i velike festivale u Istočnoj Europi, u zemljama poput Poljske i Rumunjske. Ne znam što će se dogoditi u Hrvatskoj.

Vjerojatno ništa, zato se nadam da ću te vidjeti u Italiji! Ali nadam se da će se u budućnosti situacija promijeniti i da će netko dovesti Grave Digger.

To bi bilo super. Naša booking agencija navedena je u bookletu novog CD-a i ista je agencija koja se brine za Blind Guardian! (smijeh)

Hvala na ovoj sjajnoj informaciji! (smijeh) U redu, pričajmo više o albumu. Ima gostujućih glazbenika, poput Subway to Sally, čiji autentični instrumenti stvaraju impresivnu, srednjovjekovnu atmosferu.

Da, apsolutno. Nakon što smo napisali sve pjesme za novi album, razmišljali smo kako stvoriti posebnu atmosferu. Netko je predložio korištenje autentičnih srednjovjekovnih instrumenata i pomislili smo: „Tko bi to mogao odsvirati?" Znao sam neke njemačke bendove poput In Extremo i Subway to Sally. Nazvali smo našeg tour bookera Henryja, koji je bio na turneji sa Subway to Sally kao njihov tour manager. Upitao je dečke i oni su rekli: „Nema problema, i mi smo fanovi Grave Diggera." I tako su snimili za album. Sada smo veliki fanovi i prijatelji. Također smo pitali Pieta iz Iron Saviora i Hansija iz Blind Guardiana. Oni su ranije snimali prateće vokale za *Tunes of War* i rekli su: „Nema problema, učinit ćemo to ako budemo imali vremena." Srećom, oboje su imali vremena, došli su u studio i snimili smo pozadinske vokale za dva dana.

Samo dva dana? Impresivno!

Da, samo dva dana. Cijela produkcija trajala je četiri tjedna u studiju - dva tjedna za snimanje i dva tjedna za miksanje. Mi smo heavy metal bend pa ne pišemo pjesme u studiju. Ulazimo vrlo pripremljeni. Zato je snimanje trajalo samo dva tjedna, a miksanje još dva tjedna.

Ali rezultat je fenomenalan, fantastičan! Jedan je od mojih omiljenih albuma ove godine dosad.

Hvala ti puno.

Spomenuo si ranije da na albumu ima i drugih gostiju, poput Hansija iz Blind Guardiana i Pieta iz Iron Saviora. Jasno je da među njemačkim metal bendovima postoji pravo prijateljstvo, a ne natjecanje.

Mislim da je prijateljstvo među heavy metal bendovima jače kod starijih bendova. Također sam dobar prijatelj s Kaijem Hansenom iz Gamma Raya, Mattom Sinnerom iz Primal Feara i Peavyjem iz Ragea. Usput, sviđa li ti se novi Rage?

Pa, ne znam što reći… (smijeh)

U redu, reci iskreno. Ti si heavy metal fan i pretpostavljam da ti se ne sviđa novi Rage.

Moram priznati, novi Rage je… zbunjujući! (smijeh)

Više je poput pop glazbe. Ali ako želim slušati pop, samo ću pustiti Joea Cockera ili nešto drugo.

Reći ću ovako - možda je dobar album, ali nije toliko težak i moćan koliko bih ja volio ili očekivao. U redu, promijenili su cijelu postavu, ali to vjerojatno nije razlog. Vjerojatno ću intervjuirati Peavyja sljedeći mjesec pa ću saznati! (smijeh)

Da, nema problema. Pozdravi ga od mene! (smijeh) Dobri smo prijatelji.

Nastavimo s albumom *Excalibur*. Video-promocija na VIVA-i i MTV-u danas je vrlo važna. Hoćete li snimiti video za neku pjesmu, kao što ste to učinili s pjesmom „Rebellion" 1996.?

Ne, nema videa. Nema stanica ovdje u Njemačkoj, niti u drugim zemljama, koje prikazuju heavy metal spotove. Mislim da bismo mogli razmotriti snimanje heavy metal videa za dvije ili tri godine ako heavy metal boom ostane na ovoj razini. Ali u Njemačkoj nema heavy metal TV emisija, ništa. Radije bih novac koji bismo potrošili na video uložio u live show - s puno pirotehnike, velikom pozornicom i svime ostalim.

Kako smo počeli pričati o live svirkama, nismo završili razgovor o turneji, osim što si spomenuo da ćete svirati u Italiji i vjerojatno u Istočnoj Europi.

Sviramo jednu svirku u Njemačkoj ove godine kao test. Zatim počinjemo 6. siječnja u Hamburgu - da, Hamburg. Nakon Njemačke idemo u Švedsku na veliki festival. Zatim slijede Italija, Grčka i možda Austrija i Švicarska. Nakon toga sviramo u Španjolskoj i Francuskoj. Ljeti planiramo istočnu Europu. Zatim u svibnju idemo u Sjevernu Ameriku i Južnu Ameriku.

Puno je posla, ali mi to volimo. I mi smo heavy metal fanovi i volimo turneje s Grave Diggerom u svakoj zemlji svijeta… osim Japana. Mrzimo Japan.

Zaista? Zašto ne Japan?

Ne, to nije naša zemlja. Mislim da oni više vole taj „aaaaa" visoki ton… tu vrstu glazbe. Mi smo pravi heavy metal bend, preteški smo za njih.

Sada sam opet zbunjen - vidio sam reportažu uživo na *Viva Metalli* kada ste posjetili Japan…

Oh, vidio si dio o našem putu u Japan?

Da, to je bilo prije dvije godine.

Bio je to lud put. Naš gitarist Uwe bio je bolestan tjedan dana u Japanu, imao je problema sa želucem cijeli dan. A Japan je jednostavno ludo mjesto. Tako daleko - 12000 kilometara od Njemačke!

Da, znam. Ali moraš priznati - njihovi fanovi su stvarno odani.

Da, ludi fanovi. Ali heavy metal scena u Japanu slabi.

Zaista? Možda zato što i Loudness usporava…

Oh, Loudness - jako ih volim. Vidio sam ih 1980. u Njemačkoj i oduševili su me. Da, gotovo prije 20 godina.

U redu, pričajmo više o turneji. Kako ćete riješiti autentične instrumente koje smo ranije spomenuli?

Koristit ćemo ih u showu preko samplera. Preskupo je dovesti dečke iz Subway to Sally na turneju, a mislim da će ionako biti u studiju u siječnju. Nismo veliki bend - mi smo metal bend! (smijeh) Instrumente ćemo puštati preko samplera i klavijatura.

Da, ali pogledaj Rage i njihove svirke s Lingua Mortis Orkestrom.

Pitaj njih zašto to rade trenutno! (smijeh) Možda ćemo odigrati jednu svirku sljedeće godine u Berlinu s dečkima iz Subway to Sally i oni će odsvirati te autentične instrumente u našem showu, ali samo za tu jednu svirku.

Budući da stalno spominjemo heavy metal scenu, možeš li reći više o tome što trenutno misliš o metalu?

Da, mislim da je metal trenutno vrlo popularan. Ali svaki trend na kraju prestane. Ako neka vrsta glazbe postane vrlo popularna u Europi, svaka diskografska kuća potpisat će slične bendove i zatrpati tržište. Nakon toga boom ili trend nestaje, jer jednostavno ima previše bendova za fanove. Nitko nema novca kupiti 20 ili 30 novih CD-ova ili novih bendova u mjesec dana.

U redu, čini se da smo pokrili sve važne i aktualne teme. Hvala ti puno na vremenu. Iskreno se nadam da ću te vidjeti na novoj turneji, a nadam se i u budućnosti u Hrvatskoj!

Da, bilo bi stvarno super ponovno posjetiti tvoju zemlju!

Opet?

Posjetio sam Rijeku. To je bilo 1987.

Ne mogu vjerovati, ja sam iz Rijeke! Nadam se da si stvarno uživao ovdje.

Da, grad mi se jako sviđa. To je jedna od stvari kojih se jasno sjećam. Sviđa mi se luka. Nakon toga ostao sam tjedan dana u Splitu. Stvarno mi se sviđa hrvatska unutrašnjost. Imam puno prijatelja koji su ove godine ljetovali u Hrvatskoj i rekli su da postaje vrlo skupa.

Oh da, to je sigurno. To je jedna od nuspojava uspjeha u turizmu.

Pa, nemojte uzimati previše od turista! (smijeh) Jer ako turisti ne dođu u Hrvatsku, to je još veći problem. Isto je i u Grčkoj trenutno - Grčka je vrlo skupa. Ako ove zemlje postanu preskupe, turisti će opet ići drugdje. Stvarno se nadam da ću se vratiti svirati u Rijeku.

To bi bilo odlično!

Kad se sretnemo, mislim da moramo popiti pivo.

Naravno, pivo je na mene! (smijeh)

U redu, prijatelju. Nadam se da ćemo se vidjeti u budućnosti.

To će biti prava čast za mene. Hvala ti puno!

Pozdravi od benda. Bok!

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